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SIPDIS

STATE FOR S/CT FOR REAP AND EAP/BCLTV

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SUBJECT: VIETNAM: 2003 ANNUAL TERRORISM REPORT

REF: SECSTATE 301352

1. Embassy's response to reftel follows in Paragraph 2. The response is keyed to the paragraphs in reftel.

2.

A) In 2003, the GVN clearly and frequently denounced terrorism domestically and internationally and actively supported the global coalition against terrorism. The GVN's total ratified international conventions related to counterterrorism remained at eight. The GVN supported CT objectives in international fora, submitting a counterterrorism action plan at the August 2003 APEC counterterrorism task force meeting, and signing the Joint Declaration on Co-operation to Combat Terrorism at the 14th annual ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in January 2003. The GVN has continued to agree to receive from the U.S. lists of suspected terrorists and organizations, to review its immigration records, to add these names to its watchlists, and to order searches of the records of all financial institutions for assets related to Al-Qaida and other terrorist entities. During 2003, the GVN maintained elevated security levels of 2002 at many diplomatic missions in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, including those of the U.S., to deter terrorism.

B) During 2003, there were no known acts of domestic terrorism or prosecutions for acts of terrorism in Vietnam. There were no known judicial actions in Vietnam during 2003 related to acts of international terrorism. The GVN continued through diplomatic channels to press for the prosecution of individuals accused of committing "terrorist" acts against Vietnamese interests overseas, including incidents at two SRV Embassies in 2001. U.S. authorities arrested a U.S. resident on terrorism-related charges in October 2001 and continued to hold him pending a judicial decision on a request for extradition to stand trial in Thailand for an attempt to bomb the SRV Embassy in Bangkok.

C) Extradition: The GVN did not extradite any suspected terrorists during the year, nor were any requests for such extraditions made to our knowledge. The GVN has continued to press for the extradition of two individuals resident in the U.S. it has accused of complicity in terrorist acts in Thailand; one of these individuals was also involved in an incident against the SRV Embassy in Bangkok in 2001 (see para B) and remains in custody in the U.S. as hearings continue on an expedition request by Thailand.

D) There are no significant impediments to prosecution of suspected terrorists. There is no extradition treaty between the GVN and the USG. However, at USG request, the GVN has deported individuals accused of crimes to the U.S.

E) The GVN made numerous public statements condemning terrorism. On August 6, the GVN put out a public statement "strongly denouncing" the terrorist bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta. On August 19, Vietnam "strongly denounced" the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad and declared itself "profoundly shocked" at the terrorist act. On August 21, 2003, Vietnam's Foreign Ministry released a statement declaring, "We vehemently oppose all acts of terror and strongly support efforts to eliminate terrorism from the life of mankind." On September 11, 2003, Vietnam "strongly condemned all acts of terrorism against the Iraqi innocent civilians." That same day, Vietnam released an official statement on terrorism that read as follows (verbatim):

BEGIN SEPTEMBER 11 STATEMENT

Once again we would like to convey our profound sympathy to the American Government and people, and the families of the victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks. The event has made the whole mankind more fully aware of the grave threat of terrorism. Terrorism has become a global menace. To eliminate terrorism from human life and prevent catastrophes it may cause to innocent civilians have become imperative, demanding the international community to exercise anti-terrorism efforts on the basis of respect for the UN Charter, international laws, national independence and sovereignty.

Counter-terrorism is a long-lasting combat which is closely attached to mankind struggle for a world of peace,

stability, equality and development. Consistently, Vietnam resolutely denounces and opposes to all terrorist acts under any form. Vietnam is and will be actively cooperating with the international community to fight against terrorism on the basis of respect for the UN Charter, international laws, national independence and sovereignty. So far, Vietnam has joined eight international conventions on counter-terrorism and will take into consideration of joining other treaties. Vietnam has, together with other members of ASEAN, ASEM, APEC and the UN, strongly condemned international terrorist activities and has taken concrete measures against them.

Vietnam has offered active cooperation with the U.S. in specific areas including fortifying security at the U.S. representative offices in Vietnam. At the same time, we also call upon the U.S. and other countries concerned to cooperate in preventing and strictly punishing those carrying out terrorist schemes and activities against Vietnam.  
END SEPTEMBER 11 STATEMENT.

In reaction to the spate of bombings in Iraq, Vietnam released the following statement on October 29, 2003: "We strongly denounce recent violent acts targeted at innocent civilians in Iraq and we are particularly indignant at the bombing at the headquarter of the International Red Cross, a humanitarian organization which is assisting Iraqi people to overcome consequences of many years of sanctions and war. At present, it is imperative to restore peace and stability in Iraq, enabling the Iraqi people to reconstruct their country." Following the November, 2003 attacks in Istanbul, Turkey, the GVN put out statements saying "Vietnam strongly condemns the bombings of two synagogues in Istanbul, Turkey on November 15th, causing losses to innocent civilians" and "Vietnam strongly condemns terrorist bombings causing great human and material losses in Istanbul, Turkey on 20th November 2003. The Government and people of Vietnam would like to send our deep condolences to families of the victims, to the Government and people of Turkey and of countries which have victims in the bombings."

The GVN has cooperated with the USG in a number of counterterrorism areas. The State Bank of Vietnam has issued instructions to all state, private, foreign, and joint venture banks and branches to search for assets related to named entities on lists provided by the USG, although it lacks an effective mechanism for reporting results of these searches. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has agreed that the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) would check immigration records against lists of suspected terrorists provided by the USG, though the GVN has not yet reported results from these checks. At USG request, MPS has provided a highly visible security presence around USG facilities.

Prior to 2001, the investigation and prevention of international terrorism was not a major component of the bilateral relationship. However, since September 11, 2001, the GVN has cooperated in a number of ways with the USG efforts to investigate those responsible for committing terrorist acts against U.S. citizens and interests. The GVN has agreed to conduct checks of immigration records on lists of names of terrorists who may have transited through Vietnam. Immigration authorities have also generally responded promptly to USG requests for checking the bonafides of passports and visas, especially when tipped off that the passport holders are behaving suspiciously. The GVN has contributed investigative support to U.S. efforts to identify and suspend financial assets of terrorists and terrorist groups.

There have been no acts of terrorism committed against U.S. citizens or interests in Vietnam within the country for more than five years. (There were incidents against SRV Embassies in Manila and Bangkok in 2001, and an arson attempt directed against a Deputy Prime Minister visiting San Francisco in 2001.) The GVN has provided increased police presence at USG facilities and developed measures to respond to specific threat situations.

F) The GVN supported CT objectives in international fora, submitting a counterterrorism action plan at the August 2003 APEC counterterrorism task force meeting, and signing the Joint Declaration on Co-operation to Combat Terrorism at the 14th annual ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting in January 2003. The GVN also set up a special research and analysis unit within the Ministry of Public Security to examine the situation and recommend counterterrorism policy, and maintained mechanisms for the exchange of information on terrorism with the U.S., Singapore, China, Thailand, and Japan as well as within ASEAN.

G) The GVN does not support international terrorism, terrorists, or terrorist groups.

H) The GVN has not publicly supported a terrorist-supporting

country on a terrorism-specific issue.

I) The GVN's attitude towards terrorism has remained steady since 2002.  
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